



The Problem

At the onset of the fall season, water starts to get cooler. Cool temperatures signal largemouth and smallmouth bass to start aggressively eating. They eat to put on fat for the winter. Because they're eating so much, fishing for largemouth bass or smallmouth bass can be very rewarding during the fall season. With the change in weather, largemouth bass may react to bait differently. They can be found in different areas of rivers and lakes. Where and how anglers caught bass in 2011 might inform fishing efforts in 2012.

The Questions

- Where did anglers report catching bass in fall 2011?
- What were those anglers using to get fish?
- How did fishing change throughout the 2011 fall season?

Methods








- Summarize 31 reports from MD DNR Angler's Log during the fall season (2011)
- Summarize MD DNR Fishing Reports from Keith Lockwood


Results

- Most anglers reported success in ponds and reservoirs; the most popular and productive of these were Piney Run Reservoir and Liberty Reservoir
 - ✓ deep diving and weedless worms were the most popular bait types
 - ✓ some anglers also found success with topwater frogs (artificial) and golden shiners (live bait)
- Anglers reported catching the most largemouth bass from the Potomac River of the other rivers fished
 - ✓ chatterbaits, crankbaits, buzzbaits, and Rat-L-traps were pretty popular
 - ✓ effective colors varied through the season, but some think color wasn't important
- Southern Region manager, Mary Groves, noted a hotspot on the Patuxent River between Jackson's landing up to the trailer parks above Wayson's Corner, especially near woody structure.
- Throughout the fall season, the style of fishing changes because bass behaviors respond to water temperature, prey availability, and retreat of grass beds



Summarized from K. Lockwood's 2011 Fishing Reports

September	October	November
GRASS present, prey throughout grass 	GRASS starts to retreat, prey move deep 	GRASS retreats, bass move deep 
TARGET grasses, structure	TARGET edge of grass, through grass, near deep water drop-offs	TARGET deep drop-offs, near channels or docks; TARGET remaining grass edges at out-going tide
THROW spinners or crankbaits throughout day 	THROW crankbaits, chatterbaits, soft plastics 	THROW small baits, grubs, and crankbaits, and fish slowly 
THROW topwaters, buzzbaits, at morning or dusk 		


WATER GETS COLDER

Discussion

Fishing during fall can differ substantially among years. This year, the summer drought may have caused largemouth bass to move further upstream in tributaries and seek out fresher water. How's your fall fishing going? – let us know by sending an email to fishingreports@dnr.state.md.us.

The data presented reflect patterns observed in 2011 by a few anglers or by those who reported to Keith Lockwood. Most MD anglers did not report their catches.

Acknowledgements: Thanks to anglers for reporting catches, Paul Genovese for archiving the reports, and to Keith Lockwood for writing and archiving the angler fishing reports. Please buy a fishing license – proceeds help pay for the Tidal Bass Program and protect bass fishing.